

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 0317

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, DA

SUBJ: VIEWS OF NIKOLAI EGORYTCHEV, SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO DENMARK

SUMMARY: MY SOVIET COLLEAGUE, NIKOLAI EGORYTCHEV, LUNCHE
WITH ME FEBRUARY 4. I HAD BEEN HIS GUEST SOME TIME AGO
BUT SINCE WE HAVE BOTH RECENTLY RETURNED FROM OUR COUNTRIES
THIS WAS OUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO GET TOGETHER. HE WAS RELAXED
AND SEEMINGLY TALKED FREELY ON THE SUBJECTS I RAISED. HE
PLAYED DOWN HIS RELATIONSHIP TO ALEXANDER SHELEPIN, WHICH HAS
BEEN GIVEN WIDE CURRENCY HERE, AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT
BREZHNEV'S ILLNESS WAS ONLY THE RESULT OF A "BAD COLD."
HE HIMSELF BROUGHT UP THE MATTER OF THE TRADE BILL AND
EXPRESSED THE USUAL SOVIET POSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. EGORYTCHEV WAS IN AN EXPANSIVE MOOD. HE DRANK ONE
OF MY AUTHORITATIVE VODKA MARTINIS, LAUGHED MORE THAN I
HAVE HEARD HIM DO SINCE I FIRST MET HIM MORE THAN A YEAR
AGO, AND TALKED MUCH LESS GUARDELY THAN HE EVER HAS BEFORE.
IF HE WAS AWARE OF ANY DECLINE IN THE PROGRESS OF SOVIET-
AMERICAN DETENTE HE CERTAINLY DID NOT SHOW IT, AND GAVE
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EVERY INDICATION OF ENJOYING LUNCH AT MY RESIDENCE. EXCEPT

FOR OUR TWO INTERPRETERS WE WERE ALONE.

2. ASKED ABOUT HIS CONNECTIONS WITH THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN DENMARK HE REPLIED THAT DESPITE HIS REPEATED EFFORTS THOMAS NIELSEN, THE DANISH LABOR LEADER, HAS CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO HAVE LUNCH WITH IM OR IN FACT DO MORE THAN MAKE A FEW CIVIL REPLIES TO HIS QUESTIONS. AS A ONE-TIME PARTY BOSS IN MOSCOW HE KNOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH LABOR AND HIS REBUFF MUST HAVE BEEN A BITTER PILL. IN FACT HE QUESTIONED ME ON MY CONTACTS WITH NIELSEN.

3. THE AMBASSADOR THEN EXPLAINED THAT NIELSEN HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT MOSCOW BY ALEXANDER SHELEPIN, THE FORMER HEAD OF THE KBG AND PRESENT CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET UNION TRADES UNION ORGANIZATION, BUT THAT NIELSEN HAD NEVER RETURNED THE INVITATION TO SHELEPIN. HE SAID THE REASON FOR THIS REBUTTAL WAS DUE TO THE CZECH EVENTS (SOVIETS NEVER BOTHERED TO INFORM NIELSEN, WHO WAS THEN VISITING THE USSR, OF THE OUSTER OF DUBCEK).

4. UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE THAT I KNEW OF HIS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SHELEPIN HE SAID THAT SHELEPIN WAS "NOT A PERSONAL FRIEND" BUT AN OFFICIAL WHOM HE HAS KNOWN FOR SOME YEARS. HE DID HIS BEST IN FACT TO SQUASH THE CURRENT OPINION HERE THAT HIS POLITICAL STAR IS FIRMLY ATTACHED TO SHELEPIN AND THAT THE ONLY REASON HE HAS BEEN LEFT TO "RUSTICATE" IN DENMARK FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS IS BECAUSE SHELEPIN HIMSELF IS STILL IN PARTIAL DISGRACE FOR HIS CRITICISM OF THE KREMLIN'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY AND OF MOSCOW'S AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. HE DID, HOWEVER, ADD THAT SHELEPIN'S PURPOSE IN HEADING THE RUSSIAN SECRET POLICE, THE KGB, WAS TO "REFORM" IT.

5. ASKED ABOUT BREZHNEV'S REPORTED ILLNESS, HE SAID QUICKLY THAT IT WAS NOTHING BUT A "BAD COLD" AND THEN CITED A CLOSE FRIEND WHO HAS SEEN THE PARTY BOSS LATELY AND ATTESTED TO HIS GOOD HEALTH. HE EVIDENTLY DID NOT WISH TO PURSUE THIS SUBJECT AND I LET IT DROP.

6. EGORYTCHEV SAID HE THOUGHT PRIME MINISTER HARTLING HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN NOT RESIGNING AFTER THE ELECTION AND THEN

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ATTEMPTING TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. BY STAYING ON HE ANGERED HIS FRIENDS AND OTHER PARLIAMENTARIANS BECAUSE HIS ACTIONS CONSTITUTED A DEPARTURE FROM USUAL DANISH PRACTICES.

7. EGORYTCHEV SAID HE WAS NOT IMPRESSED WITH MOGENS GLISTRUP, THE CONTROVERSIAL LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY, AND COMPARED HIM TO ARKADY, A WELL-KNOWN SOVIET COMEDIAN. I REPLIED THAT ARKADY DID NOT HAVE 24 SEATS IN THE FOLKETING.

8. HE HAD NO OTHER ENLIGHTENING VIEWS ON DANISH POLITICS BUT BRIGHTENED UP CONSIDERABLY WHEN I ASKED HIS VIEWS ON THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN PORTUGAL. HE SAID IN EFFECT THAT THE PORTUGUESE ARE AT LONG LAST GETTING A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AND APPEARED DELIGHTED WITH THE PART ALREADY PLAYED THERE BY THE MILITANT PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS.

9. DURING THE DISCUSSION ON DANISH POLITICS, I COMMENTED THAT WE WERE LUCKY, BEING PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS, THAT WE DID NOT HAVE THE PROBLEMS AND PRESSURES OF POLITICIANS. AMBASSADOR EGORYTCHEV QUICKLY COMMENTED THAT HE WAS NOT A PROFESSIONAL. I EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT THIS, AND HE HASTENED TO EXPLAIN THAT THAT DID NOT MEAN HE HAD ANY OTHER DUTIES BUT THAT HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE HAD NOT BEEN AS AN AMBASSADOR. HE WAS, HE SAID, "ONLY" AN AMBASSADOR, CLEARLY IMPLYING, IT SEEMED TO ME, THAT HE HAD NO OTHER FUNCTIONS OR DUTIES. THE TRANSLATOR HERE USED THE ENGLISH WORD "ONLY," BUT AMBASSADOR EGORYTCHEV USED THE RUSSIAN WORD WHICH MEANS "CLEAN" OR "UNSOLIED." THE TRANSLATOR, MIKOLTCHAK, WHOM WE BELIEVE IS A KGB OFFICER, SEEMED A BIT EMBARRASSED AT THIS POINT.)

10. IN REPLY TO MY COMMENT THAT QUEEN MARGRETHE WILL BE THE FIRST MONARCH TO VISIT RUSSIA SINCE THE DEATH OF THE LAST CZAR, HE SAID THAT SHE MAY NOT BE AS THE KING OF BELGIUM MAY BEAT HER TO THE KREMLIN.

11. EGORYTCHEV THEN BROUGHT UP THE MATTER OF THE TRADE BILL AND SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW A FEW SENATORS COULD DEFEAT THE WISHES OF THE GOVERNMENT. I REPLIED THAT IN OUR DEMOCRACY THIS IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT PREVELANT. HE ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE JUST AS LOGICAL FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO ATTACH
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STRINGS TO THE BILL INSISTING THAT WE TREAT THE NEGROES BETTER AS IT IS FOR US TO LINK THE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE EMIGRATION OF RUSSIAN-JEWS TO ISRAEL. I DECLINED TO SEE THE PARALLEL, AND LET THE MATTER DROP.

12. HE TWICE MENTIONED THE VLADIVOSTOK TALKS AND SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THEM. HE SPOKE HIGHLY OF PRESIDENT FORD AND ALSO OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON AND SECRETARY KISSINGER.

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